

D.T3.4.3 TRANSNATIONAL DANUBE COOPERATION STRATEGY FOR ROMA INCLUSION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

*DREAM ROAD - Danube REgion for improved Access and
eMpowerment of ROmA Development (DTP3-383-4.1)*



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1. Introduction

Social innovation is a process that increases the standard of living of the community and helps to answer the challenges that arise in society.

Social innovation is a new approach, paradigm, product, procedural process, practice, which is different from the previous practice, which aims to solve the problems and needs that arise in society, while new values, attitudes, new social relations, possibly new structures are created. Through social innovation, the possibility of improving and increasing the quality of life is created, it is helped by new (or innovative) collaborations, connections and organizational forms that function as innovation in themselves to increase the well-being of society, in the management of lags arising from regional disproportionalities, and the opportunities to catch up.

We live in an age of global social and environmental problems. One possible way to deal with these problems is social innovation.

Social integration is a process in which, during the meeting of population groups, unique values mutually influence each other, and in the system of new values that are created, their original characteristics are preserved. Along with other core values, such as diversity, acceptance and openness, equal opportunities.

The main obstacle to the social integration of the disadvantaged Roma population is the prejudice against the Roma people of the majority, non-Roma society. The consequence and result of this is the poverty, marginal position, and exclusion of the Roma minority, and the resulting deviances, which are more visible through the self-justification known in psychology, than the same deviances committed by non-Roma. As a result, people who are prejudiced against the Roma people see their prejudice apparently justified, even though it is unfounded, and they confuse cause and effect. Therefore, one of the main tasks is to change the mindset of the majority population through information, sensitization, media work, etc.

The European Union has taken many measures to encourage the member states to find complex answers with a broad cooperation of social participants to increase the integration and social acceptance of the Roma population.

The transnational strategy is prepared in the framework of the "DREAM ROAD Danube REgion for better Access and eMpow-erment to ROmA development" project, based on needs assessments, based on the implementation of transferable solutions tested in environments with local characteristics, formulates guidelines for the social integration of the disadvantaged groups of the Roma population through innovations that cross borders and national frameworks related to the social integration of the Roma population, which can serve as an aid to the local, national and for international professionals in future policymaking.

2. Project results

The main objective of the DREAM ROAD project is to empower members of Roma communities to become promoters of change. The key goal of the project was to develop the methodology of innovative training aimed at improving the digital, information and functional literacy of the disadvantaged groups of the Roma population, as well as to create broad alliances during the implementation of the project's activities.

An important means of achieving the results of the project is to increase the empowerment of local communities, to involve the Roma people in planning their own lives and making decisions that affect them, thus enabling them to contribute to increasing their social integration by making maximum use of their own capacity.

DREAM ROAD uncovers and develops the often-overlooked hidden potential of community members, believing that significant impact can only be achieved through involvement.

2.1. Transnational status, possibilities and needs assessment

Apparently, the Roma integration issue affects the countries of Europe very differently. The situation is quite different where the proportion of the Roma population is above 3%, than where it is below 0.5%, or where there is traditionally no Roma population. Our initial assumption was that the Roma integration is a common, highly important case for the whole Europe, a necessity that affects all states either currently or potentially significantly.

Social innovation is a process that increases the standard of living of the community and helps to answer the challenges that arise in society.

To start the process, it is first necessary to identify social problems and tensions. To make this information available, surveys were prepared in all the countries participating in the project to map emerging social problems. The results of the survey were summarized in the study on the "Situation, opportunities and needs of the Roma population".

The study analysed the equality and social acceptance and integration of the Roma communities living in the countries of the project, examining various aspects. After presenting the general analysis of the situation, it presents the results of the surveys in eight priority areas - housing and infrastructure, employment, education, health care, culture, anti-discrimination, political representation.

The DREAM ROAD partnership is based on extensive cooperation, one of the goals of which is to collect the results and the successes achieved in the field of work with Roma people in the region. The cooperating partners prepared an inventory of good practice in their own region, the summary document of which is also a transnational synthesis of best practices. The purpose of this document is to support the development, transfer, and implementation of innovative practices, as well as the implementation of joint initiatives that support cooperation, learning from peers and the exchange of experience at the European level.

The DREAM ROAD project was implemented by 15 partners from 10 countries of the Danube region. Roma people are represented in all countries of the partnership, but their lifestyle and the challenges they differ significantly between the participating countries.

The toolkit on intelligent participation methods was developed under the leadership of the Nevo Parudimos Association, based on, among other things, on the methodology jointly developed by the partnership and the results of the Dream Road project. The purpose of the completed document is to support the Roma integration processes, increase motivation, identify problems and find solutions. Furthermore, it promotes the cooperation of interested parties to make the participation of members of the Roma communities as effective as possible. Thus, the toolkit is also a special manual that offers a solution for involving Roma in social processes. The toolkit was used as a kind of guide during trainings organized for authorities and policy makers, as well as public institutions and other stakeholders.

2.2. Concept elaboration for Learning Labs

Learning Labs are places created by the partners of the Dream Road project, with the aim of enabling members of the Roma community to access knowledge and skills. Not just places of knowledge, DREAM ROAD LEARNING LABS strive to be places where communities can be built and connections can be made.

The Learning Labs will improve digital, information and functional literacy among marginalized Roma population. Thematic content was developed for the labs, the aim of which was to improve the digital, informational, and functional literacy of the Roma minority, as well as to create broad collaborations during the implementation.

The Bulgarian learning lab e.g. is a refurbished school bus equipped with laptops, TV, multimedia, sound equipment and a fully equipped doctor's office. The students at the school, with the support of their teachers, completely renovated and built the mobile learning laboratory. The equipment was purchased as part of the Dream Road project. The aim of the mobile learning lab is to develop innovative approaches that promote digital, informational, and functional skills, where close cooperation between Roma communities, authorities and local communities in general is realized.

The Learning Lab in Novi Sad provides all interested parties with space, equipment, and professional staff for learning, especially in the field of digital skills, which increases users' access to the labour market and their further advancement. Effective cooperation between the Roma community, authorities and local communities is key to the successful implementation of learning labs.

A network of facilitators has been established for the effective operation of the learning labs. The helpers from the Roma community play a mentoring role, and with their work they make the operation of the learning labs more effective.

2.3. Virtual Know-How platform

The innovative solutions, the lessons learned, and the knowledge gained during the trainings have become widely available through the online platform, where the actors and authorities involved are looking for solutions to their local challenges.

The platform considers the available solutions and their consequences, the possibilities for cooperation, and at the same time gives the members of the Roma communities space for self-representation. The central online location created for all relevant beneficiaries prevents the fragmentation of solutions and good initiatives, and supports cooperation between the relevant actors, political decision-makers, experts, etc. between in the Danube region and in a wider sense. It creates a collaborative space for project partners, facilitators, mentors, stakeholders, and other stakeholders to share knowledge, accelerate learning mechanisms, bridge geographical gaps and specific organizational differences.

3. Status of Roma people in present Europe

3.1. Status of Roma people

The coexistence of the majority and the minority, cultural diversity is one of the most important components of the structure of modern societies. Roma people are the largest ethnic minority in Europe.

It is worth reviewing the number of the population involved. Of course, the data are only estimates, and it can also be stated that all estimates contain deviations. Based on this, it can be concluded that Roma live in all European countries (perhaps the only exception is Iceland), but their number is of course only approximate. According to estimates, the number of Roma population living in Europe is around 10-12 million, three-quarters of them in Central and Eastern Europe, the rest in Western and Southern Europe and Scandinavia.

In Ukraine, official statistics register 47,600 persons of Roma nationality, expert estimates suggest the presence of around 400,000 Roma. The largest number of European Roma live in Romania, officially 2.5% of the total population, i.e. 535,000, but according to some estimates, the number of the community may actually be as high as 2.5 million.

About 6 million of them are citizens or residents of the EU. According to the estimated numbers, Hungary has the largest community in the EU after Romania, Bulgaria and Spain.

Many Roma in the EU are still subject to prejudice, even though discrimination is prohibited across the EU.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides independent, fact-based advice to EU and member state decision-makers. Its aim is to make exchanges of ideas, policies and legislation related to fundamental rights more targeted and based on as much authentic information as possible. The Vienna-based organization interviewed 8,500 Roma in twelve European countries in 2021: Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, North Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Slovakia.

According to the agency's findings, the Roma community continues to face "appalling levels of deprivation, exclusion and discrimination", while progress is insufficient and too slow.

According to the EU agency, the situation in education is dramatic. 71% of young Roma drop out of the education system prematurely, while the dropout rate for those aged 18-24 in the EU is only 10%. In addition, compared to six years ago, 44%, the proportion of Roma children who are forced to study in segregated education has risen to 52%. The situation is particularly bad in Slovakia and Bulgaria in this regard.

While the poverty risk and health status of the Roma population improved, medical care remained limited. Access to employment did not improve either, while the housing situation remained difficult.

According to the EU agency, the situation has improved in terms of harassment and hate crimes against the Roma minority, but this cannot be said about the discrimination they face. The FRA believes that, as a vulnerable minority, Roma people are also the "first victims" of the social upheavals caused by the coronavirus epidemic and inflation.

According to the agency's findings, the Roma community continues to face "appalling levels of deprivation, exclusion and discrimination", while progress is insufficient and too slow.

According to the report, the governments of the member states must use all possible means to change this intolerable situation.

Among other things, FRA's research showed that

- 80% of the Roma population live in poverty, while the EU average is 17%. This number was the same at the time of the last survey, in 2016.
- The percentage of those who live in a place without adequate toilet facilities has decreased from 61% to over 50%, and compared to 30% 6 years ago, the percentage of those who do not have piped water has now increased to 22%.
- The employment rate of the Roma population is 43%, which is significantly lower than the EU average of 72%.
- The Roma life expectancy for women is 71 years, for men 67, while the EU average is 82 and 76 years for women and men.

3.2. New European and national strategies

The term Roma is a collective name that refers to various Roma people and groups (Roma, Romnicsel, Sinto, Mánus, Jenis, etc.). A part of the Roma population leads a nomadic lifestyle, which is why they are often called "travelers" (e.g. in France: gens de voyage, in Italy: camminanti). The term Roma is used by convention in EU policies. According to data from the Council of Europe, the largest minority in Europe is the Roma.

Those in a socially excluded situation face discrimination, hostility, socio-economic exclusion, poverty and limited access to healthcare on a daily basis, all of which result in a lower life expectancy. The data of the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) report show that in the member states with the largest Roma population, about 80% of the nationality live below the country's poverty line, 33% of them spend their days in apartments without running water, while 50% of young people between the ages of 6 and 24 does not participate in education.

Dealing with the complex problems of the disadvantaged Roma groups, promoting their social integration, and reducing the inequality of opportunities means a coordinated commitment by the EU.

The European Commission adopted a new Roma strategy after it was determined that the previous one did not achieve significant results. The new strategy serves as a framework for the integration strategy of the member states.

The previous strategic framework of the European Union focused primarily on the socio-economic integration of the Roma population. The new EU Roma strategy adopted by the Commission on October 7, 2020 formulates a strengthened and reformed framework, namely so that all Roma in Europe can fully enjoy their opportunities and develop their abilities. The new initiative in this regard articulates three overarching goals: equality with all other members of society, social and economic inclusion, and participation in political, social, economic and cultural life.

Based on the previous framework strategy, "**The EU Roma framework strategy for the realization of equality, inclusion and participation 2020-2030**". document takes better account of the diversity of the Roma population and aims to ensure that each country's strategies reflect the different groups - women, youth, children, cross-border travellers, stateless persons, LGBTI people and the elderly, as well as people with disabilities - specific needs. The EU strategic framework encourages the rise of a comprehensive approach that takes into account how the different components of identity can together aggravate discrimination.

In addition to the general validation of the social inclusion of the Roma population, the strategic framework also places emphasis on the targeted measures to be taken in the individual fields, which help the Roma people to use the basic services and enjoy their rights in the same way as the members of the majority society.

In recent years, the EU's Roma strategies have not achieved the results they were supposed to achieve, which is why it was important to develop and adopt a new European Union-wide Roma strategy, of which monitoring and feedback are already an active part.

The involvement of the stakeholders is essential for the success of the most important programs, as this way catch-up will be truly integrated.

Eliminating poverty brings economic stability to both Roma and non-Roma society.

The new strategy seeks to involve the affected communities to a greater extent in the decision and implementation, and pays particular attention to quality education.

The new framework program focuses on a total of seven areas:

- **equality:** fight against anti-gypsyism and discrimination;
- **inclusivity:** reducing poverty and social exclusion in order to close the socio-economic gap;
- **participation:** facilitating participation through cooperation and trust
- **education:** increasing effective equal access to quality inclusive general education;
- **employment:** increasing effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment;
- **health:** improving the health of the Roma population, increasing effective equal access to quality health and social services;
- **housing:** increasing effective equal access to adequate housing and basic services.

The goal was to achieve full equality by 2030, and the Commission proposed minimally achievable goals based on the results achieved under the previous framework, promoting the actual equality and socio-economic inclusion of the Roma population.

The new EU Roma strategy defined the following goals:

- Reducing the proportion of Roma experiencing discrimination by at least half;
- Doubling the proportion of Roma reporting discrimination;
- Reducing the poverty gap between the Roma and the rest of the population by at least half;
- Reducing the existing gap in the proportion of Roma children receiving early childhood education by at least half;
- Reducing the proportion of Roma children attending segregated primary schools by at least half in member states with a significant Roma population;
- Reducing the employment gap and the gender gap by at least half;
- Reducing the gap in life expectancy by at least half;
- Reducing the existing gap in the proportion of people living in inadequate housing conditions by at least one third;
- Ensuring that at least 95% of Roma have access to piped water.

Member States had until September 2021 to prepare and submit their national strategies based on the new objectives and recommendations and to report on their implementation every two years. Based on the results of surveys conducted by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union and information from civil society, the Commission will monitor the results achieved in the implementation of the goals set for 2030.

Guidelines and a list of measures that all EU member states must take in order to speed up the progress towards equality, inclusion and participation of the Roma citizens have been drawn up. The guidelines and measures range from the establishment of support systems for Roma victims of discrimination to school awareness campaigns, support for financial literacy, promotion of Roma employment in public institutions, and improvement of Roma women's access to quality medical examinations, screening and family planning.

3.3. Digital decade of Europe

The European Union strives to create the foundations for a human-centred, sustainable and prosperous digital future for its citizens and businesses.

On March 9, 2021, the European Commission presented its vision and plans for the digital transformation of the European Union until 2030. The Commission proposes the four main directions of the digital compass defining the EU's digital decade:

- Expertise,
- Secure and sustainable digital infrastructures,
- Digital transformation of businesses: more than 90% of SMEs use digital tools intensively, at least at a basic level,
- Digitization of public services: Digital identity: 80% of citizens use a digital ID,

The Digital Compass proposal defining the EU's digital decade envisions a Europe for 2030 that puts people at the centre, supporting the digital development of businesses and citizens.

The European Union strives to create the foundations for a human-centered, sustainable, and prosperous digital future for its citizens and businesses.

- People at the centre: digital technologies must protect the rights of individuals, support democracy and ensure that all digital actors act responsibly and securely.
- Freedom of choice: people must be provided with a fair online environment and protected against illegal and harmful content.
- Security and protection: the digital environment must be secure and protected. All users, from children to the elderly, must be equipped with the right skills and protected.
- Solidarity and inclusivity: technology should unite people not divide them. Everyone should have access to the internet, digital skills, digital public services, and fair working conditions.
- Participation: citizens must be allowed to participate in the democratic process at all levels and exercise control over their own data.
- Sustainability: digital tools must support sustainability and the green transition. People need to know the environmental impact and energy consumption of their devices.

4. Intervention areas of the strategy

4.1. Equality: Fight against Roma discrimination

Roma people are the largest ethnic minority in Europe, about 6 million people live in the EU. A survey conducted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency in 2019 showed that in the six EU countries examined, almost half (45%) of Roma and migrant people experienced discrimination in at least one area of their lives.

Anti-Gypsyism is a typical form of racism. In a narrow sense, anti-Gypsyism means the anti-Roma attitude or the negative stereotyping that appears in hate speech. However, anti-Gypsyism contributes to the advancement of a much wider spectrum of discriminatory expressions and practices, which can also appear in tangible form, such as the poor housing and educational conditions provided to the Roma population. As with other forms of racism, the distribution of power and wealth is an important factor in the perpetuation of different levels of racism.

What distinguishes anti-Gypsyism from other forms of racism is its widespread social acceptance across Europe. Anti-Gypsy attitudes and actions are tolerated without any moral stigma, which is not typical for other forms of racism. Criticizing or discriminating against Roma minority too often becomes a justifiable and legitimate act.

Like other forms of racism, anti-Gypsyism is based on the way most of the society relates to and treats people it identifies as "Gypsies". To combat anti-Gypsyism, we need to examine traditional societies and listen to those who are affected but also generally silenced by anti-Gypsyism.

The transformation of society and public opinion can only be formulated as a long-term goal. The fight against discrimination must begin by changing social attitudes, since discrimination stems to a significant extent from a lack of knowledge and, consequently, from fear of the other, so the problem must be tackled at its root, with measures aimed at promoting tolerance and diversity at an early age.

In the shorter term, it would be desirable to develop and further improve a legal and regulatory background that aims (with sanctions or incentives) to block the negative discrimination of Roma people in applying positions in institutions of power and decision-making, or, where appropriate, to make positive discrimination functioning. Discrimination and marginalization are a combined process of reciprocal factors. Prejudices and the resulting discrimination push a significant number of those affected into marginal situations, either in relation to residence, housing conditions, access to school, health care, or in other areas of life, such as the world of work, the social situation, etc. This marginalization then results in conditions that appear as a stamp in public thinking and reproduce the circle of stereotypes ("ghetto", "putri", auxiliary school, ragged clothing, "Gypsy crime", etc.) the basis of discrimination.

In programs related to the Roma minority we usually find initiatives that aim to break down the prejudices of the majority society. The gap between the Roma citizens and the majority society must be bridged through training, the transfer of Romological knowledge, and increasing tolerance.

However, it would be important not only to change the thinking and attitude of the majority. It is necessary to achieve that the awareness of Roma's often negative identity also changes. This group can define its own identity only against the exclusion and rejection of the majority society. Many of them were completely assimilated, but the majority did not accept them. They no longer have a past, but they have not been given a new future either, or in the present they are pushed to the fringes of society. That is why it is important for Roma groups to announce programs in the framework of which they can develop their positive identity, and thus give all their members every motivation to become interested in the further education of their children and the development of their positive qualities and abilities. For example, we draw the attention of those organizing labour market or other training to the importance of training for solving discriminatory situations playing a role in all training aimed at unemployed Gypsy youth. It would be desirable if representatives of minority municipalities and civil organizations would also participate in this kind of preparation.

Active state action is needed to offset social differences to ensure equality. The basis of these measures is that, due to existing objective differences, the same substantive law alone is not sufficient to achieve equality, and to achieve actual equality in content, additional, special rules are also necessary in relation to groups of persons with specific characteristics. That is, to give a general example, it is in vain that everyone has the same right to participate in education, if the social conditions of a certain social stratum do not allow people belonging to that stratum to choose learning instead of earning money. Thus, the affirmative measure is originally intended to compensate for a specific, social disadvantage, i.e. it is linked to the prohibition of discrimination by being tied to a spontaneous situation of inequality. On the other hand, there may be another application of these measures, which is also related to the prohibition of discrimination, when the disadvantage to be compensated arises from discrimination.

In relation to groups affected by racial discrimination, the need for affirmative measures appears in such a way that, in addition to the repressive and preventive measures used to overcome future discrimination (that is, measures prohibiting and sanctioning discrimination, as well as preventive and educational measures), additional measures are necessary in the past, and to remedy the effects of the discrimination suffered continuously since then. Discrimination suffered systematically for a specified period marginalizes the members of the given group in socio-economic life, causing a cumulative disadvantage. In relation to racial discrimination, the

task of affirmative measures is therefore to remedy this disadvantage, which is indirectly linked to the specific characteristics of the members of a given group, as an effect of discrimination.

Their common difficulties are limited access to quality education and problems of labour market integration, leading to further poverty and social exclusion, lack of quality healthcare and poor living conditions.

The in-depth evaluation and the conclusions drawn from it by the Council, the European Parliament and several European-level and national civil society organizations show that there is a need to renew and strengthen the commitment to the equality and social inclusion of the Roma population. In the framework of this commitment, special attention must be paid to non-discrimination, including tackling anti-Gypsyism, and focusing on four areas of socio-economic integration: education, employment, healthcare and housing. The commitment should also reflect the needs of each group and the diversity within the Roma population; within the framework of the commitment, the Roma minority must be involved in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies aimed at the equality and social inclusion of the Roma minority; improve target setting, data collection, monitoring and reporting; and the most important policies must be made more sensitive to the topic of Roma equality and social inclusion. When planning the measures, special attention should be paid to the gender dimension.

The principle of subsidiarity must be taken into account when taking action against anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, i.e. problems must be solved where they arise, and the intervention of higher levels must be limited to the necessary minimum, but must provide the necessary assistance. During the planning of individual activities, the specificities of each country must be considered - for example, the number and proportion of Roma people within the total population in each state, the general economic situation, the unique characteristics of the target groups - with due respect, as well as taking into account that the given country has, it is possible to develop a policy aimed at a specific ethnic group. Member State approaches and measures to promote the social inclusion, equality and participation of Roma citizens must be selected and adapted to the unique circumstances and needs of each Member State, which includes the need to address disadvantaged groups in a broader context, including the Roma minority. The general measures must be designed in such a way that they ensure effective access to the members of Roma minority.

4.2. Inclusiveness: reducing poverty and social exclusion to close the socio-economic gap

In a broader sense, the concept of inclusion means the acceptance and appreciation of the diversity and any kind of difference of the individuals in the given community, and through this means one of the strongest levels of ensuring equal opportunities. The target group of inclusion has been continuously expanding since the second half of the 20th century. At first, inclusion mainly meant the education of people with physical and mental disabilities, later migrants (inter- and multicultural education) and those with a disadvantaged economic and social status, as well as children with special educational needs.

Today, the inclusive approach rejects all kinds of labelling and categorization and recognizes that difference and diversity are independent of disadvantage.

Roma people are often victims of racial and social discrimination and do not have equal access to education, employment, housing and health services.

National or local initiatives formulated in the interest of reducing the social exclusion of the Roma minority should serve the efficiency of the use of these four areas by the Roma citizens, with the aim of increasing their living conditions and thus their social inclusion.

Knowing the poor education indicators of the Roma population and the educational disadvantages of the Roma students, as well as the resulting high dropout rate, is it even possible to talk about the school as an opportunity to break out. The data show that the low level of education of the Roma minority is on the rise again, the number and proportion of those with secondary and especially higher education is barely measurable. In this sense, the school system does not and cannot represent a realistic breaking point. Based on current trends, the period in which the level of education of the Roma minority approaches that of the majority society can be at least two generations. In the meantime, it is obvious that the social disadvantages of the Roma minority related to education cannot be reduced, primarily the labour market and employment disadvantages. This means that a passive, non-intervening education, and adult education policy can "write off" generations who are pushed out of the social division of labour, and their almost only income can come from various social transfers and undeclared work, which can contribute to the majority to the survival and strengthening of society's stereotypes and prejudices.

With a well-thought-out strategy and the right choice of goals, tools, methods and programs, serious results can be achieved in a relatively short time. This process is multi-stakeholder, from education policy to Roma organizations, all possible stakeholders must participate in it. Based on the results of Roma research, the tasks, and possibilities of public education, but also of adult education, can be clearly outlined. The chance of the Roma minority to "break out" from the life situation defined by their low level of education is also fundamentally influenced by, among other things, the very close cooperation of the actors involved in the process. It is essential to speed up this multi-actor process, otherwise, new, and new generations, half-generations and Roma groups will have to be given up as those who cannot even get the chance to "break out".

The school system can indeed be a point of departure for the Roma minority, but not for the entire Roma population, i.e. the "breakout" - the defining area and means of which is the school system and adult education - can be limited and concentrated on younger Roma generations and better-off Roma groups. This process, in which education and adult education policy can have a decisive role, as well as the appropriate types of schools, can only be realized with the active cooperation of the Roma and an educational policy offer and tool system based on their intentions.

The social debates are primarily focused on the shortcomings experienced in the field of education, even though the most valuable results have been achieved in this field, the tensions are much greater in the field of living conditions and employment.

The majority society does not reject Roma culture and customs, but rather the forms of poverty. If we want to improve the employment, social and financial situation of the Roma minority, if we want to strengthen the success of Roma students at school, if we want to achieve a reduction in prejudice and segregation in the living environment, then we need to start programs that:

- improve the employability of Roma,
- significantly reduce poverty,

- achieve that Roma families become partners of the school and can help their children learn.

The attitudes and expectations of the members of the Roma groups, who join industrialization and modernization only belatedly, are different. Sociological research on values has drawn attention to the fact that the work-related expectations of uneducated, unskilled, cumulatively disadvantaged Roma people are radically different from those of their peers of similar status belonging to the majority society.

Other reasons and explanations for the disadvantageous labour market situation of the Roma population, in addition to their different expectations, are territorial inequality (the impoverishment of small rural areas, a large Roma population in economically depressed areas); disadvantage in education; and the professional structure considered obsolete in the postmodern economy.

In many European countries there are programs that actively support labour market integration and reintegration. The programs usually operate in a modular system, the modules include job search assistance, personal counselling and short one- or two-day job search training or special skills training. It would be necessary to establish an institutional system providing complex services that can simultaneously apply the active tools listed above, i.e. it coordinates training and public employment, plays an intermediary role in the organization of subsidized employment and provides active help in finding a job. In addition, the strategy aimed at greater involvement in the world of work and the use of active labour market tools can only be successful if it is adapted to the existing development resources and capabilities. Only such programs can create the possibility of long-term work, which is a secure basis for livelihood, for Roma people who are currently permanently unemployed.

4.3. Participation: facilitating participation through cooperation and trust

One of the main goals of the catch-up policy is to promote the strengthening of social and national cohesion, the increase of social cohesion and solidarity, and the reduction of phenomena related to social separation and discriminatory social patterns of separation. The priority is to improve the opportunities of those in the most disadvantaged situations, and to eliminate extreme forms of poverty.

Within this, priority should be given to measures aimed at the root and causes of the problem, i.e. those that contribute to interrupting the transmission of poverty and reducing inequalities. The labour market opportunities and social acceptance of the members of the cumulatively disadvantaged groups can only be promoted by the use of tools that develop the social skills and work culture of the affected people, reduce their socialization disadvantages and school backlogs, and by integration work carried out in their own living environment.

The complex backwardness caused by high levels of poverty and the lack of appropriate conditions for healthy development can be passed on for generations in the absence of interventions. The realization of social catch-up and integration is our common interest from the point of view of sustainable social development. It is essential to widen social membership, so that the disadvantaged and disengaged groups also feel that society needs them and counts on their active participation. Attitude formation is effective not only for children, although it is most

effective in this stage of life, but it is also necessary for the adult population. Initiating and maintaining communication between institutions and organizations related to disadvantaged people living in extreme poverty, as well as the affected individuals and families, is essential for solving problems. There is a fundamental emphasis on the formation of community attitudes, the methodology of developing dialogue, the development of professional cooperation, and it is also important to learn about and apply conflict management methods.

The goal is to ensure social and territorial cohesion, where the benefits of growth and job creation are widely shared, and those living in poverty and social exclusion can live in dignity and as active members of society. All this calls for the strengthening of the active social participation and civil organizations of disadvantaged people, especially the Roma minority.

In the case of small settlements, it can be said that the dialogue, capacity-exploring, support and community activity-generating activities, and the strengthening of the inclusive attitude of the local actors - self-government, civil organizations, churches, volunteer helpers - are well encouraged by the presence of an external expert organization with extensive experience.

One of the basic conditions for the birth and development of local communities is the creation and operation of community and service spaces. Through the definition of community functions (socialization, economic well-being, social participation, community control, mutual support), it points to the possibility of supporting the individual where individual effort is insufficient. "Settlement"-type service providers and community spaces have countless advantages, among other things, social groups are locally accessible to them, their services are accessible to anyone, and the main means of their effectiveness is complexity, which means that the effects are strengthened in practice. Another very important aspect is the service of those prevention activities, which are provided exclusively by these actors. In order to achieve the changes, he involves the members of the community, jointly mapping the problem, the demands, the needs, which are then implemented flexibly with the support of the helper.

In addition to all this, it is necessary to develop a methodology that supports individual and community development with family and community management activities. Part of this work is, on the one hand, local government support and organizational development, and on the other hand, the implementation of family and community social work, with the help of which the members of families with many - housing, social and other - disadvantages become suitable so that they can connect with the settlement and the community in an area integrated into his life. To be successful, the complexity and parallel support of different areas of life from early childhood to the end of the active working age are extremely important in the implementation since the improvement of the situation of families also promotes the well-being of children. A continuous presence program can ensure the establishment of a relationship of trust, during which the professionals participating in the implementation can provide support in solving not only minor everyday difficulties, but also deeper-rooted, larger problems.

To strengthen social participation and cooperation, the uniformity of the implementation of individual settlement and regional catch-up programs must be established. During the implementation of mutual learning and exchange of experiences between the programs - "network operation" - a fruitful dialogue is created between the narrower and wider environment, and the cohesion between Roma and non-Roma persons and communities increases.

Gender-based discrimination against Roma women is also strengthened by origin-based discrimination. In certain problem areas, the almost exclusive presence of Roma women is extremely typical, therefore, concentrated interventions are needed in these cases. One of the basic sources of Roma women's vulnerability is their low level of education and the resulting disadvantageous position on the labour market. The primary task is to support them from an early age with concentrated means to increase their chances at school and on the labour market. Roma women are today in a cumulatively disadvantaged position in all European countries. Their disadvantaged situation can be presented with headlines: prejudice, segregation, unemployment, lack of education, extreme poverty. In any case, the possibility of breaking out has a threshold: self-organization. Emphasis must be placed on the active social involvement of Roma and non-Roma women who are in a disadvantaged situation, often living in segregated areas, and on encouraging their public and cultural cooperation and strengthening community building. The establishment of Roma women's civil organizations, associations, and foundations must be supported, and advice must be provided on legal issues arising during the establishment. The maintenance of foundations and the monitoring of their operation must be helped by organizing professional events and continuous mentoring. The building of relations between individual civil organizations and the cooperation of communities must be helped and encouraged.

The organization of synergistic programs - trainings, workshops, awareness raising activities- can help to further develop the social catch-up methodology. In this respect, the *DREAM ROAD Report on Future Cooperations* can provide useful guidelines, to strengthen social awareness, as follows:

- Deep-seated prejudices and the resulting discrimination can be identified as the main causes for the disadvantage of many Roma in Europe. Therefore, it is crucial to break through the structures of prejudice and to increase/improve the political participation of Roma minorities in public administration.
- Barriers to Roma integration are often erected by the majority population. Therefore, measures should also be addressed more to the majority population, which suffers from the disease of racism. This can mainly be done by raising awareness among the political and economic elites and the mass media. Moreover, instead of developing new policies and measures, those already existing should be made more effective.
- New project initiatives should be developed bearing in mind that it is not only the Roma minorities needed to be made more active but that the general public and those working with the Roma communities (educators, public employees, health care providers etc.) should be sensitized to the needs of Roma children and adults.

4.4. Education: increasing effective equal access to quality inclusive general education

In Europe, many thousands of Roma do not go to school at all or did not attend school at all, or left school with poor results. In some countries, the fact that Roma people and migrants do not

have identity documents hinders school enrolment. Another obstacle for Roma students to go to school is the lack of public transport or the necessary money for transport, racist intimidation, and the lack of textbooks. In some countries, Roma students are overrepresented in alternative systems such as "private student" education. Many Roma children with developmental difficulties, mental or physical disabilities cannot go to school at all in certain European countries. Roma children are also affected by the lack of kindergarten places.

Currently, one of the neuralgic points of public education in European countries is the failure to achieve school equality for Roma minority students. This affects not only education, but also the social and political situation of the Roma population and affects also the majority-minority relationship.

It is therefore important to analyse the school system to find out why it is not able to bring the educational level of the Roma into line with that of the majority society. From these analyses, differentiated strategies are to be developed and achievable goals for education policy formulated, whereby Roma are to participate actively in this process on a mandatory basis.

The general reason, or at least the explanation, for falling into a low social status and being stuck there in modern societies is a low level of education, a lack of professional qualifications, or the availability of a non-marketable profession. The Roma population's access to a higher education and a competent profession is a steppingstone that is an essential condition for exiting long-term unemployment, getting into better housing conditions, and becoming citizens who can take care of themselves and their families instead of needing social care.

The field of education must be examined from three perspectives:

Ethnic aspects: In all European countries, the same legal, economic and educational conditions must be guaranteed for the education of the majority society as well as for ethnic minorities. The regulation of Roma minority education and the definition of its content can be determined in agreement with the legitimate interests of the affected communities.

Social aspects: taking into account the fact that the education system continuously reproduces social inequality in most countries during its operation, i.e. the parents' advantages and disadvantages are passed on to their children, a special intervention is needed to stop this process. Since a significant number of Roma families are cumulatively disadvantaged, special social and pedagogical programs are needed to compensate for the poor social conditions of Roma children. In the case of those Roma families that lack even the minimum financial conditions for schooling, it is mandatory to ensure the financial conditions essential for education. It must also be ensured that scholarships encourage, and colleges support the further education of the socially needy, among them the affected Roma youth.

Cultural aspects: to prevent and successfully manage conflicts arising from different socio-cultural backgrounds, it is necessary to include modules in education systems that are aimed at learning and understanding the different behaviour patterns of different cultural backgrounds and enable the development of mutually acceptable, consensus-based rules of behaviour, compliance and enforcement. These modules can become successful with the participation of Roma and non-Roma students, parents and teachers, opinion makers and the media, that is, it is necessary to start a discourse aimed at mutual understanding and agreement on the expected and feasible behaviour patterns with the involvement of the widest social public.

4.4.1. Public education

If we want to succeed in doing something for the Roma minority to get a higher education, to get a chance to rise, then we must face the fact that the children of separated Roma families usually fail when they first meet the world of school.

The school success of Roma students can only be improved within the framework of such complex programs that, in addition to the development of pedagogical tools, also cover the training and employment of parents and the improvement of living conditions.

The goal is to develop programs that create efficient and sustainable service systems adapted to local needs. The main objectives of the programs are to increase the access of disadvantaged Roma children to quality early childhood education and care services, as well as to improve the early childhood development results of Roma children, which improve their school completion and later life opportunities.

In the program, professionals must work together with parents for the physical, mental, and social development of children. This not only helps the integration into the kindergarten, but also develops the educational competences of the parents. All of this contributes to breaking the cycle of disadvantage for children.

Nursery schools, kindergartens, mentoring systems, schools, colleges, scholarship programs and professional colleges cover the path to becoming a complete adult. With this, a complex support system that pays special attention to all stages of development must be available in the integration strategy at the educational level. This can be made more effective by collaborations with cultural, civic, and other organizations that are not aimed at education, but are still closely related to it, so horizontal development paths can complement vertical, forward-looking development.

4.4.2. Education of adults

Leaving school without a degree directs attention to the frequent consequence of school failure, dropout, low education and, as a result, the danger of being excluded from the labour market and society. Social groups characterized by significant educational disadvantages come primarily from the Roma population. Dropping out of school without a formal education affects this population to a greater extent, but even within this, Roma girls have particularly serious disadvantages. The development and persistence of the disadvantaged situation can be traced back to - among other educational and sociological factors - the lack of employment. At the same time, this finding can also be verified the other way around: the chance of the disadvantaged entering the labour market is severely limited.

With the help of adult training and services, social mobility channels should be made more efficient, thereby helping to improve the education, employment, housing, and mental health of disadvantaged social groups.

The 19-45-year-old generation has a chance to realistically participate in adult education. In this wider age group, in addition to the missing primary school education, the acquisition of vocational and secondary education seems realistic. It certainly seems practical to acquire the missing primary school education in connection with some professional course.

In addition to the transfer of cognitive content and practical professional training, an important element of these trainings should be the formation of appropriate attitudes and the strengthening of motivation. Those who neither experienced in their own lives, nor saw in their environment the model according to which learning and training are the effective way to prosper in life and to better living conditions, need to strengthen their positive attitude towards learning. Special care must be taken to overcome prejudices and to exclude prejudiced manifestations. There are many good methods available, making them public, disseminating and using them is the key to successful training.

4.4.3. Development of digital, information and functional literacy

Digital literacy, digital information literacy is one of the complex areas of competence of the 21st century, which constantly challenges the people of our days due to the constant development of ICT tools. In addition to the three basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic), digital competencies have increased in value and have become one of the cornerstones of lifelong learning.

Therefore, one of the goals of this training is to develop a positive attitude towards digital tools, to raise the attention of the target group concerned to the world of the Internet and to make them realize that its use is now necessary. To teach the most basic use of tools, how to find the necessary information, how to choose between them, interpret them, use them ethically or how to operate relationships on the world wide web. We want to open the door to a knowledge that we provide a handhold for in the initial steps to reach, so that later the individual can progress and develop. Hopefully, with this, we will enable the participant in the training to become a basic user of the digital world, through which he will make his own life, his everyday activities easier in terms of work, study, administration, entertainment, living and communication. This development contributes to the social appreciation and integration of the individual. Training is a digital opportunity for individuals, but through social relationships (family members, relatives, friends) the acquired knowledge can/will continue to circulate, thereby contributing to reducing the digital gap between the different layers of society.

4.4.4. Training of teachers and specialists

The methods of successful education of students of Roma ethnicity, socially disadvantaged and those from different cultural backgrounds should be included in the training of teachers. The necessary theoretical and practical knowledge must be collected, developed into teaching material, made accessible, and incorporated into institutional training. In addition to graduate teacher training, modules that prepare teachers to help Roma students' progress successfully at school must also be incorporated into postgraduate training, professional continuing education for teachers, and the operation of various professional services. In addition, it would be worthwhile to establish reference and base schools with the aim of making the "good pedagogical practices" known to others - especially future teachers. These schools can serve as training grounds for students participating in teacher training.

Education also has the task of preparing professionals who deal with Roma people in the course of their work in the most diverse areas of life for successful professional activities that are free of prejudices, provide equal treatment, and be successful. These trainings include many fields of

expertise, from health workers to members of the administration and members of the law enforcement authorities.

4.5. Employment: increasing effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment

Equal opportunity and full access to employment is a fundamental condition for social inclusion, income is decisive in terms of material well-being, it plays a role in planning survival strategies and even in shaping relationships between social groups. To achieve these goals, adult training and the development of labour market competencies are essential, as well as support for the acquisition of work experience.

The set of characteristics of Roma workers entering the labour market is not competitive. As a result of their low level of education, their health, their behaviour different from the majority norm, prejudices about their accuracy and reliability, as well as the deterioration and damaged personality that inevitably accompanies decades of unemployment and poverty, not only in large companies following international market requirements, but also in terms of profitability and efficiency they also end up at the bottom of the rankings in small, striving companies.

It cannot be denied that the presented model of labour ranking can also be interpreted as a structured model of discrimination, but we must take it into account when developing a strategy for excluded groups.

A close correlation can be established between education and employment level:

In terms of employment, we need to distinguish between today's schoolchildren, young adults, and older adults. We must strive to ensure that today's schoolchildren get a full-fledged, competitive qualification, and that their chances on the labour market are the same as those of the majority.

The integration of young adults who have been unemployed for a longer period into the labour market can only be expected after a longer transition period. After training integrated into employment, they must work in "protected" workplaces for several years, e.g. in regional projects for the development of infrastructure, environmental protection or urban rehabilitation. (Block rehabilitation, renovation of pensioners' apartments, etc.) Some of the older Roma workers who have been unemployed for a long time will not fit into the organizations of the "primary labour market". The purpose of their employment, in addition to reducing support costs, is primarily to maintain acceptable living conditions, lifestyles and living conditions for the majority environment.

Adult learning aims to modernize labour markets and aims to enable people to develop their skills throughout their lives, thereby increasing participation in the labour market and bringing labour market supply and demand closer together, including through worker mobility.

Surveys by CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training show that the demand for low-educated labour is decreasing across Europe. This poses a particularly high risk, since the rate of unemployment and low employment is extremely high for those with no more than a basic education.

To increase employability and entrepreneurial activity, human capital must be developed - with skill development, training, health preservation and disease prevention.

The pivotal point of the catch-up policy is to increase the employability of low-educated and under-educated people, one of the tools of which is adult education. The function of adult training that meets the needs and expectations of the labour market as a replacement for professional knowledge, as well as its practice-oriented implementation embedded in the work, ensuring the acquisition of professional experience and the development of employee competencies, together increase the employment chances of the participants in the training. One of the keys to the efficiency and effectiveness of labour market programs and projects is that the scope and content of the trainings are adapted to the needs and expectations of future employers, and to the conditions of the jobs to be filled. As a result, it is essential to map and identify the needs of employers and public employers before compiling the training portfolio and preparing the training programs. The training program, thematic, the adapted methodology and curriculum, adapted to the needs of the job and the capabilities of the participants characterized by a disadvantage in the labour market, help to overcome learning difficulties and obstacles. The professional experience prescribed in the professional and exam requirements, as well as the professional experience expected by the future employer, requires the training institutions to ensure the workplace conditions during the professional practice phase of the training. Conducting practical training in workplace conditions also means building relationships between future employers, public employers, and employees. During the work embedded in the training, the employer can directly verify the professional knowledge and individual competencies of the future employee.

In addition to basic and key competence development and courses aimed at obtaining a basic degree, the range of training must also include courses for professional training and even professional qualifications. The primary aspect is increasing employability. In determining the training courses, the future employer usually has a big role to play. Based on the characteristics of the settlement and the opportunities for public employment, trainings that can most often be classified as agricultural professions, as well as construction trainings that are well-suited to improving segregated housing conditions, were preferred. For participants with labour market disadvantages, it is advisable to provide support during training and at the beginning of the employment period to maintain their motivation and their integration. During the training, training staff, theoretical and practical instructors, and social workers can help the participants.

During the period of employment, the primary task of the social worker who helps the participant integrate and supports their work is mentoring, preparing the participants for long-term, regular work, developing their employee competencies, and facilitating integration into the workplace organization and workplace culture. The purpose of the employment mentoring activity is to support the long-term employment of the participants. Often, for participants coming from long-term unemployment or inactivity, the continuous work schedule, physically and mentally taxing tasks, long-term commitment, and household obligations work against long-term employment. Helping to solve individual life situations and providing a high degree of mental support is the basic task of the social worker. Experience shows that the use of local social workers of Roma origin is more beneficial from the point of view of the target group, as they know the local specifics better, are more easily accepted by the participants, and approach them with greater trust and honesty. The establishment of a close trusting, personal and accepting relationship and the almost constant availability ensure the effectiveness of the mentoring work

from the participant's point of view. It is necessary to support social workers with supervision services at regular intervals, to deal with problems, uncertainties, conflicts, and communication problems that arise during their individual life, contact with participants, and thus they can receive effective, external help for the performance of their tasks. Disadvantaged people need a lot of time to commit to their own small community, to formulate realistic individual goals, and to actively participate in activities, which can be made more effective with an effective mentoring program.

4.6. Health: improving the health of Roma people, increasing effective equal access to quality health and social services

As a result of social exclusion, the most needy, under-educated and unskilled, long-term unemployed persons, including the overrepresented Roma citizens, in many cases do not have access to basic and specialized social, health and child welfare services, or do not have sufficient information about their availability. Ensuring equal opportunities and increasing service efficiency in the aforementioned areas both require the gradual transformation and renewal of territorial and professional disproportionalities, adapted to local needs. An important element of this is the facilitation of access and the mitigation of existing differences in the quality of services.

The health status of the Roma population has been particularly unfavourable for decades and lags behind the health indicators of the majority society. This unfavourable image is also reflected in the lifestyle and environmental factors that directly determine the state of health, as the research of the past decades has clearly shown. Improving the situation cannot be delayed. As a result of the above, meaningful, and essential change is only possible with broad, scientifically based, persistent and consistent socio-political, educational, employment and development measures and programs carried out over years and decades. In addition, the health and health development programs designed and implemented with the involvement of the stakeholders and targeting the disadvantaged, especially the Roma population, also have a right to exist, but they are not sufficient in themselves to bring about lasting, large-scale change affecting the broad masses of the population.

The poor health status of the Roma people is related to a lower quality of life, low education, alcohol consumption and smoking. Roma people are aware of the screening tests and consider them important, but the appeal in their direction is not effective. When it comes to health care, the Roma population is more often discriminated against than other members of society.

Their lifespan is far behind the majority. The life expectancy of a Roma is ten years lower than that of the entire population. The life expectancy of Roma women is 71 years, for men 67, while the EU average is 82 and 76 years for women and men. The incidence of depression is particularly high among them. Among them, it is a health-threatening factor; many people also fall ill with one of the diseases that are also common in the majority. The incidence of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer death, but also in terms of risk factors, characterizes Roma everywhere as higher than citizens in general. However, compared to average citizens, the Roma people rarely use health services, they have a different attitude towards their own health and the health care system, which may also be since they are demonstrably discriminated against at all levels of the care system.

The situation is made worse by the fact that the self-image of disadvantaged Roma is false - more than half of the Roma society considers their own health status to be very good or good. All levels of the health care system are used by fewer people than others. The vast majority of the Roma population rarely or never consult a family doctor. Outpatient services are seldom or never used, and nearly 40% never use inpatient care. One-sixth participate in dental screening, and only one-third participate in cervical cancer and lung screening.

Protecting the mental health of members of the Roma minority and preventing and treating their problems resulting from drug use is a particular problem.

The new coronavirus epidemic has also highlighted that "excluded and marginalized Roma communities are extremely exposed to negative health and socio-economic effects.

Although many well-intentioned programs to help the Roma people have already been launched in all European countries, they usually did not lead to results, or at least did not bring an improvement in their health status as expected. A project with a new approach can break the ranks of programs that have not been effective so far.

The goal is to preserve the mental health of Roma population and improve their health status, which can be achieved through free, organized health screenings and follow-up, and the provision of medical equipment. By creating an incentive system to help fill in the missing professionals, it is necessary to create the opportunity to access services that ensure the preservation of mental health and the treatment of diseases, even in disadvantaged and underserved areas.

New communication techniques, our own interactive website, and living examples must be used to address the young generations in particular, in order to improve their attitude towards the health care system and thereby increase their demand for the use of health care (e.g. vaccinations, screening tests), which contributes to their health preservation and is expected to increase their lifespan.

Education for tolerance towards the Roma people should be included in healthcare training. Furthermore, it is necessary to improve the supportive relationship with the healthcare sector, one of the possible means of which is to involve the Roma population in the endeavours of the healthcare sector.

4.7. Housing: increasing effective equal access to adequate housing and basic

The housing situation of the Roma population is significantly worse than that of the average population. Nearly 30% of the Roma population live in poor-quality (dilapidated) apartments, compared to 8% of the average population, and 30% do not have access to high-quality public water supply. The majority of Roma households heat with wood (81%), while only half of non-Roma households do. Half of the Roma population lives in a household that has arrears in terms of payment obligations, a problem that affects Roma families living in extreme poverty particularly seriously. The most typical debts are owed to water and electricity providers.

In addition, it is a serious problem that the narrow rental housing sector (including social rental housing) forces people with low incomes, including a significant number of families living in deep poverty and Roma families, into the ownership sector and into poorly located and low-quality apartments. Within the municipal rental housing sector, the proportion of low-quality

apartments is even higher, and the problem of segregation also appears within the rental housing stock.

Segregation is what the sociology of settlements calls the phenomenon during which the residences of various social strata are separated spatially. Due to the social distance between the Roma and non-Roma ethnic groups, the inward-looking, closed communities due to prejudices and attacks, the choice of a separate place of residence has always been typical among the Roma population. Segregation is not a problem in itself, but by transforming existing differences and social distance between social strata and groups into spatial distance, and thus by eliminating connections and points of contact into an increasingly insurmountable obstacle.

The most populous transnational nationality in Europe is the Roma community, but it is also the poorest, and due to their financial situation, they are often excluded from socio-economic processes and economic development. Compared to society as a whole, the Roma people are more strongly affected by extreme poverty, housing problems, and unemployment, which affect their living conditions and affect their employability. The spatial location of the Roma population, the position of the families within the settlement and the relations with the majority society are determined and influenced by the size of the given settlement, and the number and proportion of the Roma population within the resident population. Currently, more than a quarter of the Roma population lives in Roma settlements or in Roma-inhabited neighbourhoods. A suitable housing is greatly influenced by the geographical location of the property. Examining the comfort level of residential properties and the affordability of housing, a regional concentration of disadvantages emerges. One of the factors preventing the reduction of territorial inequalities is the lack of public transport, which is characteristic of underdeveloped regions. The insufficient level of transport services in these areas can also limit access to job opportunities, social, health and public education services. In the case of housing poverty, the conditions for adequate housing are not met, such as, for example, ownership is not legally settled, access to basic services and infrastructure is not ensured, affordability problems arise, it is unsatisfactory in terms of quantity or quality (small floor area, low level of comfort, etc.), or the property is poorly located in terms of access to services, infrastructure, and the social environment.

The difference between the concept of social integration is the contribution of the person concerned. It is defined by "enabling" the target groups for real participation in the planning, implementation, and sustainability of the interventions, to adapt to the changed circumstances. In many countries of Europe, we can talk about a complex combination of infrastructural developments, investments, and human resource investments during the implementation of the settlement eradication programs implemented in the last decades. The infrastructural intervention areas primarily meant improving housing conditions, making residential buildings more liveable, improving access to the segregated and creating community spaces. The prerequisite for the interventions was the legalization of housing and the settlement of property relations in the case of many segregated communities.

The primary goal is to develop a coherent social housing policy strategy based on local conditions, which defines the main housing problems according to target groups and develops a relevant action plan with the allocation of appropriate resources.

- It is necessary to increase the amount of the housing maintenance subsidy and extend the debt management subsidy to all settlements, as well as to adjust the conditions of the subsidy to deal with housing debt of people living in extreme poverty, including Roma households.

- It is essential to increase the stock of social rental housing, an effective way to do this is to include private rental housing.
- The enforceability and accountability of the equal opportunity policy must be strengthened in regional development policy, and equal opportunity planning and developments must be created and implemented in real partnerships with the stakeholders.

In the case of specific programs targeting settlements and segregated areas, settlement liquidation and housing mobilization should be the primary goal. Even in the case of basically rehabilitation projects, this goal must be prioritized, and the real complexity of the programs ensured the sustainability of the results.

Not even a quarter of Roma population and migrants living in European countries can afford basic things such as heating or healthy food, and up to a fifth of their children go to bed hungry. Roma travellers are disproportionately affected by discriminatory practices in the granting of building permits in cases where travellers purchase privately owned plots to park their caravans there. They are also discriminated against when using campsites, hotels and/or other temporary accommodation. In countries with a traveller, itinerant population, local governments must be obliged by law to establish short- and long-term caravan parks that meet basic standards.

5. Summary

Social catch-up is a long process, the results of which appear in the medium and long term.

We can see that answering questions related to the Roma people is a very serious and complex task for the European Union. However, the number of Roma population and the complexity of the problems require an urgent solution on the part of the European Union, European countries, and local communities.

EU member states must focus on managing four policy areas – education, employment, health, and housing – with an integrated approach, which remain key.

The primary goal of the strategy is therefore to address the socio-economic exclusion of the Roma people by promoting equal access to education, employment, health, and housing. In the Roma communities, in addition to social issues, special attention must also be paid to digital catch-up. According to the commission's report, the progress achieved in the last ten years in the integration of the Roma population can be said to be quite limited, even if the significant differences between policy areas and countries are clear.

By implementing the goals set out in the strategy, positive changes will become available, which will create better, more liveable conditions for our fellow human beings struggling with disadvantages. The strategy's tasks focus on supporting the social mobilization of disadvantaged people. The aim of the interdependent programs is to open social mobility channels for the participants with the help of complex, mutually reinforcing and opportunity-creating tools. The main goal of some of the interventions of the strategy is to facilitate the acquisition of a higher education, the acquisition of new professional knowledge, the development of their knowledge and competences, and support their placement in the workplace for our disadvantaged fellow citizens.

By achieving these goals, it wishes to ensure the improvement of the quality of life of those concerned, their access to income, the improvement of their housing conditions and health, as well as the change of attitude of the younger generations and the creation of a chance for a higher quality of life. Through complex interventions, it directly helps disadvantaged people and communities - in improving education, professional skills, training, job preparation, employment, housing, family, community, health, and mental status. The organizations participating in the implementation of the strategy should see it as their mission to take on an opportunity-creating, social-developing role, through which disadvantaged workers will gradually, step-by-step, become active labour market players again. As a result of their personal development, those involved in programs and trainings developed based on the complex target system of the intervention areas become active members of their local community and then of wider social communities, their social and lifestyle skills, mental and psycho-social condition improve. They become capable of active participation in the community, can get involved in training and employment programs, and in the long term, their employment opportunities expand. Self-confidence, self-care, and the need for individual responsibility increase in them, thereby reducing their disengagement.

The implementation of social catch-up at the regional level is more strongly connected to complex territorial development than before. The realization of the goals set out in the strategy requires a broader and closer social cooperation than before, between the decision-making organizations, the local and national governments, employers, churches, educational institutions, social and civil organizations.

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